

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00
PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 PM-05 AID-05 OMB-01
IGA-02 TRSE-00 H-01 SS-15 ACDA-12 EB-08 EUR-12
/089 R

DRAFTED BY AF/C:WLSWING:LAR
APPROVED BY AF/C:LDJUNIOR
AF/W:RHOUEK (DRAFT)
AF/P:BRUSSELL

-----039045 180700Z /15

P 172335Z JAN 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LAGOS PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CG, NI, US, SOPN

SUBJECT: PRESS GUIDANCE ON NY TIMES ARTICLE ON ZAIRE AND
NIGERIA

REF:

1. FOLLOWING IS PRESS GUIDANCE USED AT TODAY'S NOON PRESS
BRIEFING IN THE DEPARTMENT. QUOTE:

Q: YESTERDAY YOU SAID YOU DID NOT HAVE A FIGURE FOR
FOREIGN MILITARY SALES (FMS) CREDITS FOR ZAIRE IN FY-79.
DO YOU NOW HAVE A FIGURE YOU CAN GIVE US?

A: NO. THE REASON I AM UNABLE TO GIVE YOU SUCH A FIGURE
IS THAT THE ADMINISTRATION HAS NOT YET MADE ITS BUDGETARY
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PRESENTATION TO THE CONGRESS ON FOREIGN MILITARY SALES
(FMS) AND INTERNATIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION AND TRAINING
(IMET). THIS IS WHY I COULD NOT GIVE YOU A DEFINITE ANSWER
TO YESTERDAY'S BRIEFING.

IT SIMPLY WOULD BE UNFAIR TO THE CONGRESS WERE I TO GIVE
YOU THE ACTUAL FIGURE WE PROPOSE BEFORE IT IS FORMALLY PUT

FORWARD FOR CONGRESSIONAL CONSIDERATION.

Q: BUT YOU DID SAY YESTERDAY THAT IT MAY VERY WELL BE

CORRECT THAT MILITARY AID TO ZAIRE IS GOING TO BE MORE IN
FY-1979. DO YOU STAND BY THAT?

A: IN ORDER NOT TO GET INTO A LONG DISCUSSION AS WE WERE
ABOUT TO YESTERDAY AS TO WHETHER OUR SECURITY ASSISTANCE
TO ZAIRE WILL BE MORE OR LESS THAN IN FY-1978, LET ME JUST
SAY THAT WE BELIEVE ZAIRE CONTINUES TO HAVE A REAL SECURITY
PROBLEM AND A JUSTIFIABLE NEED FOR OUR MILITARY SUPPORT
IN THE FORM OF FMS CREDITS.

Q: BEFORE LEAVING THIS, LET ME ASK WHETHER YOU STAND BY
YOUR STATEMENT THAT THE ADMINISTRATION'S 30 MILLION DOLLAR
REQUEST IN FY-1978 WAS REDUCED BY THE CONGRESS TO 17.5
MILLION DOLLARS?

A: YES, THAT IS CORRECT, AND A MATTER OF PUBLIC RECORD.

Q: YESTERDAY YOU SEEMED TO BE MAKING SOME CONNECTION BE-
TWEEN LEVELS OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO ZAIRE AND THE SHABA
SITUATION. WOULD YOU CLARIFY WHAT YOU MEAN?

A: IN SPEAKING OF THE SHABA EXPERIENCE, I HAD REFERENCE
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TO THE NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE WHERE IT MENTIONS "A FIVE
YEAR MILITARY AID PLAN PREPARED BY THE PENTAGON...TO PUR-
CHASE HEAVY EQUIPMENT...TANKS AND PERSONNEL CARRIERS"--AND
TO THE "SCRAPPING" OF THIS PROGRAM.

ALL I WANTED TO SAY WAS THAT, OUT OF THE SHABA EXPERIENCE,
OUR ZAIRIAN FRIENDS AND WE DREW THE CONCLUSION THAT THIS
PACKAGE OF EXPENSIVE, SOPHISTICATED EQUIPMENT AND WEAPONRY
WAS NOT REALLY WHAT WAS CALLED FOR IN A SHABA-TYPE SITUA-
TION.

SINCE THEN, THE ZAIRIANS HAVE DECIDED ON A MORE BASIC
APPROACH, CONCENTRATING ON BASIC DEFENSE AND LOGISTICAL
CAPABILITIES. WE AGREE WITH THAT DECISION. THE ARTICLE
IS THEREFORE INCORRECT IN ITS ASSERTION THAT WE HAVE ABAN-
DONED EFFORTS "TO UPGRADE" ZAIRE'S ARMY. ON THE CONTRARY.
WE HAVE CHANGED OUR APPROACH TO GET BACK TO BASICS, AND WE
ARE WORKING CLOSELY WITH THE ZAIRIANS, BELGIANS, FRENCH AND
OTHERS TO HELP THEM RE-ORGANIZE AND MAKE MORE EFFECTIVE
THEIR MILITARY FORCE. THAT, IN SUMMARY, IS WHAT I MEANT
IN MY SHORTHAND REFERENCE TO OUR LEVEL OF FMS CREDITS
BEING "COMMENSURATE WITH THE POST-SHABA SITUATION IN

ZAIRE."

Q: DO YOU ALSO STAND BY YOUR STATEMENT YESTERDAY THAT DECISIONS ON ZAIRIAN MILITARY AID ARE NOT RELATED TO DECISIONS ON NIGERIA?

ONS ON NIGERIA?

A: YES. LET ME REITERATE THAT OUR DECISIONS ON LEVELS AND OVERALL APPROACH TO SECURITY ASSISTANCE TO ZAIRE HAVE BEEN TAKEN WITHOUT REFERENCE TO NIGERIA BUT IN RELATION TO ZAIRE'S LEGITIMATE SECURITY CONCERNS. AS I POINTED OUT YESTERDAY, NIGERIA DOES NOT RECEIVE ANY SECURITY ASSISTANCE. THEY DO PURCHASE TRAINING AND SOME MATERIEL COMMERCIALLY. I SAW THE STORY IN THIS MORNING'S NEW YORK LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TIMES AND WANT TO EMPHASIZE THAT NO 2 MILLION DOLLAR MILITARY TRAINING PROGRAM FOR NIGERIA WAS EVER CONTEMPLATED LET ALONE PROPOSED. NIGERIA FOR YEARS HAS BOUGHT ALL THE TRAINING IT RECEIVES.

Q. THE ARTICLE ALSO EXPRESSES REPORTED ADMINISTRATION CONCERN ABOUT ZAIRE'S HEAVY INDEBTEDNESS AND ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL PROBLEMS. IS THIS TRUE?

A: ZAIRE'S ECONOMY HAS SUFFERED SEVERELY RECENTLY -- IN SUBSTANTIAL PART FROM THE DRAMATIC FALL IN COPPER PRICES IN 1975 TO THEIR CURRENT DEPRESSED LEVEL OF ABOUT 52 CENTS A POUND.

WE ARE WORKING CLOSELY WITH ZAIRE TO OVERCOME THESE DIFFICULTIES. WE ARE, FOR EXAMPLE, MEETING AT REGULAR INTERVALS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE SO-CALLED PARIS CLUB TO WORK OUT RE-SCHEDULING ARRANGEMENTS WITH OTHER CREDITOR NATIONS AND ZAIRE. AN AMERICAN BANK, UNDER THE LONDON ACCORD IN 1977, IS ATTEMPTING TO PUT TOGETHER A CONSORTIUM OF PRIVATE AMERICAN, EUROPEAN AND JAPANESE BANKS TO PROVIDE ZAIRE A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF CREDIT TO EASE ITS IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS. ZAIRE HAS ACCEPTED AN IMF STABILIZATION PROGRAM, AND WE SUPPORT THIS. AND WE ARE TAKING OTHER MEASURES TO HELP WITH ZAIRE'S BALANCE OF PAYMENTS AND FOREIGN EXCHANGE SHORTFALLS.

SO THE ANSWER IS 'YES', WE CONSIDER THEIR ECONOMIC SITUATION SERIOUS, BUT WE ARE ALSO WORKING COOPERATIVELY WITH ZAIRE TO IMPROVE THIS SITUATION. UNQUOTE.

2. TEXT OF PRESS CONFERENCE PORTION DEALING WITH THIS QUESTION BEING TRANSMITTED REFTEL.

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3. DECLASSIFY UPON RECEIPT. CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NEWS MEDIA COMMENTS, MILITARY SALES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE013148
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: WLSWING:LAR
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780026-0324
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780153/aaaabsqf.tel
Line Count: 177
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 2cc1cfe2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3759803
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESS GUIDANCE ON NY TIMES ARTICLE ON ZAIRE AND NIGERIA
TAGS: SOPN, MASS, CG, NI, US
To: KINSHASA LAGOS
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/2cc1cfe2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014